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To: GVTA Board of Directors
From: Glen Leicester, Director, Implementation Planning
Date: June 16, 2003
Subject: **Vancouver Harbour Passenger Marine Study**

Staff Recommendation:

That the GVTA Board receive the report dated June 16, 2003, titled "Vancouver Harbour Passenger Marine Study" for information.

PURPOSE

TransLink staff propose to undertake a Vancouver Harbour Passenger Marine Study in 2003 to examine the feasibility and cost implications of potential passenger marine connections across the Burrard Inlet and English Bay basins. The study will begin July 2003 and be completed by the end of the year.

BACKGROUND

The Greater Vancouver area is traversed by ocean inlets and major rivers. Bridges over these watercourses act as bottlenecks in the movement of people and goods. Ferry services offer the opportunity to bypass bottlenecks, reduce travel times, improve reliability and attract new transit ridership.

SeaBus, introduced in 1977, crosses Burrard Inlet in 12 minutes, maintains a reliability of over 99.6%, and removes an average of over 1,350 people from the congested bridge crossings during the peak hour peak direction. Tourism accounts for an estimated 22% of total SeaBus ridership during the peak summer period compared to 6% over all transit modes.

Despite the success of SeaBus, transportation authorities have been unable to identify another passenger ferry service in the Lower Mainland that offers a cost effective alternative to bus services across the harbour.

The issue was last examined in 1995 when BC Transit undertook a study of the feasibility of operating passenger-only ferries on routes within Vancouver Harbour. The report examined nine different potential marine connections from the North Shore to downtown Vancouver, UBC and False Creek and found that in all cases the

cost recovery was below those for existing bus services. On this basis the marine service options seemed at the time to be less efficient than bus services.

Since 1995 a number of factors have changed which may have a bearing on the outcome of such a study. For example, it appears that there are now a wider variety of vessels available to provide passenger ferry services and that capital costs have come down relative to 1995 figures. There may also be a broader range of service delivery options, and traffic congestion has continued to increase on bus corridors connecting the North Shore and Vancouver.

Considering that a variety of factors have changed since the last study and in response to continued demands for improved ferry service, TransLink plans to re-examine the feasibility of marine connections across Vancouver Harbour as a part of the Long Range Plan. Discussions with North Shore municipalities have been supportive of the study.

The study will examine a range of issues including:

- Potential routings and terminal locations
- Projected passenger demand
- Travel time compared to other transportation options
- Vessel technology
- Terminal and infrastructure requirements
- Regulatory and environmental implications
- Order of magnitude capital and operating costs
- Potential changes to bus service and cost implications
- Integration with existing transportation and transit services
- Fare options
- Revenue cost recovery
- Funding and service delivery options

Expecting that large-scale options such as SeaBus are not likely to be feasible, this study is intended to review options for smaller-scale ferry services. The study will provide input to the GVTA's Long Range Plan scheduled for completion during fall 2003. It should be noted that a separate study will examine future demands and expansion potential on the existing SeaBus route between Lonsdale town centre and Waterfront Station.

DISCUSSION

The study will commence in July 2003 and be completed by December. It will be guided throughout by a steering/technical committee with staff representatives from TransLink and municipalities in the basin including North Vancouver City and District, West Vancouver, Vancouver, Bowen Island, and Belcarra. Based on findings from previous studies it is expected that the study will concentrate on services that may use smaller vessels and terminals than the existing SeaBus.

The study will be organized into two phases. Phase 1 will identify and screen a broad range of service options. This phase will consider factors such as relative passenger demand, travel time, vessel options, terminal feasibility, terminal accessibility, revenue and operating cost. From this two to three options will be carried forward for detailed examination.

Phase 2 will examine the feasibility of the short listed group of route options. In this phase the study will examine a range of factors including environmental considerations, regulatory, safety and environmental considerations, integration with existing transportation and transit services, proximity to populated areas, marine and navigational conditions, berthing and mooring, service characteristics, vessel technology, service delivery options, financial considerations, fare collection and others. The phase will also identify a staging sequence for such services as an input to the new Long Range Plan.

The steering/technical committee will participate throughout the phases identifying potential projects, approving the screening criteria and the short list of options as well as other technical work as appropriate.

The project will consult key stakeholders in the region including GVRD, BC Ministry of Transportation, First Nations, Vancouver Port Authority, Harbourmaster, Transport Canada, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, BC Ferries, Coast Guard or others as appropriate. The focus of the study will be marine crossings within the English Bay and Burrard Inlet basin between points within the GVRD, though the study will be attentive to potential implications for planned or future services that may connect with communities outside the GVRD including the Sunshine Coast, Howe Sound or Vancouver Island.

The primary outcome of the study will be a report identifying potential future marine services in the study area, including projected costs, ridership, revenues, community impacts and key steps to implement the service.

ALTERNATIVES

This study is an essential element for the development of a Long Range Plan in the region. If deferred the regional plan would be incomplete, lacking an assessment of marine options in the English Bay and Burrard Inlet basin.

CONCLUSION

TransLink plans to undertake a study in the summer and fall of 2003 to examine the potential for new marine crossings in the Vancouver Harbour concentrating on smaller vessels and terminals. The result will be a report providing input to the new Long Range Plan, which identifies routes, costs, market potential, vessels, terminals and other relevant recommendations.